

REMARKS

This is in response to the office action dated October 8, 2004.

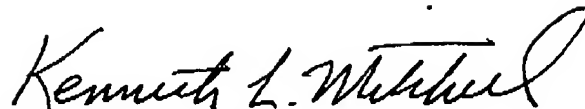
Applicant notes the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, paragraph 2. Accordingly, amendments to claims 1 and 2 have been made to clarify the invention and satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. Section 112. Reconsideration of claims 1 and 2 is respectfully requested in view of the amendments.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shibayama et al (US Pat. 6,189,686). Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection. First, the '686 patent does not disclose front hinges having curved surfaces whose curvature varies as a function of the distance from the central axis. The instant application includes and claims front hinges having curved surfaces whose curvature varies as a function of the distance from the central axis. These features are prominently claimed in the instant application. It is this feature of the invention which facilitates operation of the conveyor chain while it is in a curved conveying section. The '686 patent on the other hand is directed toward lubrication of the chain and channeling the lubricant away from the chain and makes no disclosure whatsoever of hinges having curvatures which vary as a function of distance from a central axis.

Reconsideration of claims 1 and 2 is requested. Rejoinder of claim 3 is respectfully requested. If rejoinder of claim 3 is not permitted by the Examiner, then applicant gives the Examiner the authority to cancel claim 3 to put the application in a condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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